FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020 • SUNRISE EDITION • REAL. FAIR. ACCURATE.

Legal groups ask state chief justice to halt eviction, debt proceedings. **Page 5A**

Gas prices fall below $1.90 per gallon, the lowest in 18 years. **Midlands**

With no CWS, businesses near ballpark try to stay in the game. **Midlands**

A list of restaurants that have switched to delivery or takeout. **Omaha.com**

Omaha World-Herald

Governor's order covers four metro area counties

Crowd limit mirroring Douglas County's rule also applies to Cass, Sarpy, Washington; more eateries, bars pinched

By Martha Stoddard
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

LINCOLN — Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts on Thursday imposed a limit on public gatherings in Cass, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington Counties in response to the spread of the novel coronavirus disease.

The directed health measure, in effect until April 30, requires restaurants and bars in those counties to close their dining areas immediately and move to takeout, delivery or curbside-only service until further notice. The measure also restricts alcohol sales to carryout and delivery only.

A separate executive order gave restaurants flexibility with their liquor licenses, allowing them to sell alcohol for consumption elsewhere, including sales in a drive-thru lane.

Four additional cases were confirmed by officials Thursday. They include a woman and man in Lincoln County, a Nemaha County man and a Sarpy County man with underlying health issues who is being hospitalized.

At We'll Smoke You BBQ in Gretna, co-owner Jackie Burke already had shut down the eatery's dining room when a reporter called around 2:30 p.m. Thursday. Even before the governor's announcement, she had been limiting diners to no more than 10.

"As a business owner, this scares the bejesus out of me," Burke said. "Thank God, knock on wood, we have a whole lot of loyal customers who won't be sad if they have to take their food to go."

Burke said that one of her two part-time employees had said she wasn't coming in until after the coronavirus outbreak had passed. But the loss of weekend dining room business will hurt, she said.

"The more they scare the average bear, the more they won't come out," Burke said.

Another Gretna business owner, who spoke on the condition that she not be named, called the order "dumb."

Fortunately, she said, her business had a good day Thursday providing takeout meals.

"As long as they keep doing that, that's huge," she said.

The order also directs schools in the counties to operate without

See Ricketts: Page 3

Douglas County sheriff now sends gun-permit seekers away with paperwork

KAYLA WOLF/THE WORLD-HERALD

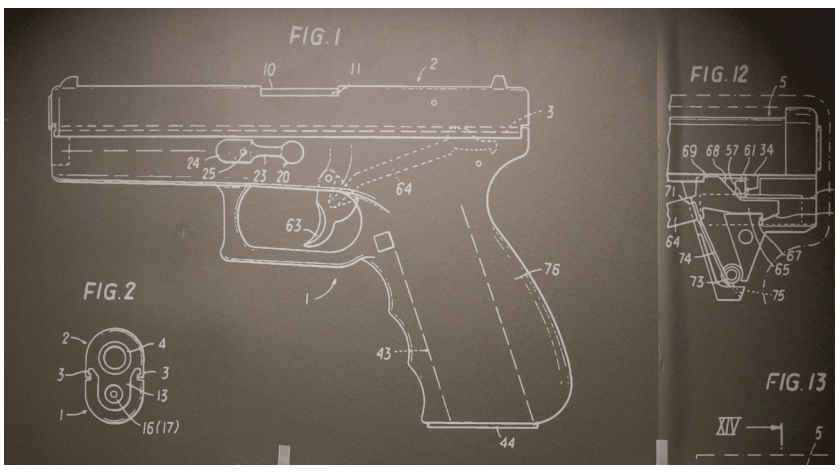
Bryan Breitkreutz teaches a handgun class at 88 Tactical in Sarpy County. The classroom wall is painted with diagrams of handguns, like the one below. With growing crowds of people showing up to get handgun purchase permits, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office changed its process Wednesday, and applicants can no longer walk in and quickly get a permit.

As virus spreads, local gun sales boom

By Christopher Burbach
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

A surge in gun purchases since the coronavirus hit the U.S. has led to standing-room-only crowds in the Douglas County Sheriff's Office lobby, forcing the agency to change how it issues permits.

The Sheriff's Office normally issues about 25 handgun purchase permits a day. That grew to 40 on March 12, then 70 on March 13 amid a wave of event cancellations and reports of the coronavirus spreading in Nebraska. On Monday, 117 people requested permits. An additional 100 came in Tuesday,



prompting the change in procedure. On Wednesday, 77 people walked in and got permits before the Sheriff's Office changed the policy at midday — and 88 people picked up packets after that. By midday Thursday, 80 more people had come in for packets.

Before COVID-19, a person could walk into the Sheriff's Office, fill out the paperwork, undergo a quick background check and walk out the door with a handgun purchase permit 15 minutes later.

Now, it will take several days. There's no more walk-in service.

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Pandemic rules in labor, delivery units restrict certain new arrivals

By Kelsey Stewart
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Savannah Frazer expected the birth of her third child to be just like the other two.

She planned on having family members present for the birth. Afterward, she expected to welcome a slew of visitors eager to meet the newest addition to the family.

Instead, the Council Bluffs woman had to select two guests for the duration of her stay at Creighton University Medical Center-Bergan Mercy. Only her significant other was there for the birth of son William Wallace on Tuesday.

"It's just tremendously different than with my previous children," Frazer said.

In light of the novel coronavirus outbreak, local hospitals are implementing new visitor rules, including on labor and delivery

See Babies: Page 2

HEALTHY SURGE AT HOSPITAL

Methodist Women's NICU sets twins, triplets record. **Midlands**

Party that never was

The staff at Creighton spent over a year preparing for the NCAA tournament that wasn't played. **Sports**

Weather

High: 32 **Low:** 22
Mostly sunny **Details:** 4A

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Sasse stands apart in opposing virus aid bill, calling it 'shoveling money'

By Henry J. Cordes
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

As the White House and Congress rush to provide aid to businesses and workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse has slammed the proposals as "really dumb."

Sasse was one of just eight senators who voted Wednesday against a bipartisan aid bill that was subsequently signed by President Donald Trump. The $100 billion bill enhances unemployment insurance, ensures that businesses offer workers two weeks of paid sick leave, increases funding for food assistance programs and guarantees free testing for the coronavirus.

Sasse blasted the measure in a floor speech Tuesday night, saying the plan was rushed and amounted to "shoveling money out of a helicopter."

"There is a herd mentality around this building right now where a lot of normally smart people are literally saying things like,

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